



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS
FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTY
COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 739
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
<http://lachildrenscommission.org>**

Monday, February 22, 2016

10:00 AM

AUDIO FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING. (16-1105)

Attachments: [AUDIO](#)

Present: Commissioner Geneva Berger, Commissioner Carol O. Biondi, Commissioner Maria Brenes, Commissioner Candace Cooper, Commissioner Patricia Curry, Commissioner Wendy Garen, Commissioner Sydney Kamlager, Commissioner John Kim, Commissioner Liz Seipel, Commissioner Janet Teague, Vice Chair Jacquelyn McCroskey, Vice Chair Wendy B. Smith and Chair Sunny Kang

Absent: Commissioner Adrienne Konigar-Macklin

I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

1. Call to Order. (16-0207)

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kang at 10:03 a.m.

2. Introduction of the meeting attendees. (16-0212)

Self-introductions were made.

3. Approval of the minutes from the meeting of February 8, 2016. (16-0213)

On motion of Vice Chair Smith, seconded by Commissioner Brenes (Commissioners Cooper, Kamlager, Kim and Konigar-Macklin being absent), this item was approved.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

II. REPORT

4. Chair's Report. (16-0214)

Chair Kang reported the following:

- **Recognized and thanked Commissioner Brenes for joining the Educational Coordinating Council which allowed Commissioner Seipel to step aside;**
- **Chair Kang will represent the Commission on the Children's Trust Fund Oversight Committee;**
- **There will be a CSEC 101 training held in Norwalk on March 22, 2016, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.;**
- **Today's regular meeting will be shortened due to the rescheduling of a presenter; and**
- **The Executive Committee will meet right after the Regular Commission for Children and Families' meeting is adjourned.**

5. Executive Director's Update. (16-0216)

There was no update from the Executive Director.

Commissioners Garen and McCroskey presented an updated on behalf of the Legislative Committee.

Commissioner Garen reported the following:

- **The Board of Supervisors and Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) prioritized issues of access to subsidize childcare for kin care and unrelated families;**
- **Last year there was an attempt to solve the problem, now there is a new attempt to create a statewide fund of \$27 million; \$22 million will be allocated for childcare payments and remaining will be used to help foster parents find suitable childcare and training for childcare providers on trauma informed care;**
- **There appears to be no oppositions and will be done through a budget process;**
- **Leadership is being provided by Genie Chough, Children's Deputy of the Third Supervisorial District;**
- **The Committee has been working hard in gathering endorsements from the Chamber of Commerce and alternative payment agencies; and**

- The Committee will be asking the Commission at the next meeting to vote for endorsement.

Commissioner McCroskey reported the following:

- The Committee is expecting to have an initial hearing in the beginning of April 2016;
- The Committee has already received a letter of support from the Intergovernmental Relations Office which has gone to the assembly and the senate;
- Multiple constituents from the Child Welfare side and early education side need to come together and have agreement that a new source of funding to bridge childcare; focused on the youngest children;

Commissioner Garen further reported the following:

- The current idea is a six-month transitional voucher with the idea of moving families into longer term subsidized care.

III. DISCUSSION

6. Reflections on the Annual Retreat. (16-0217)

Commission Seipel expressed her appreciation in the preparation for the Annual Retreat. She appreciated the one on one conversation with the consultant and the outcome of it, as well as the fact that they were able to finance a facilitator for the Retreat.

Chair Kang was grateful for having a facilitator and mentioned it made a huge difference.

Commissioner Brenes also expressed her appreciation and stated that she was able to learn the depth and accomplishments of the Commission. Commissioner Brenes questioned how the Commission will operationalize stating that there needs to be a connection between the focus and working together; should come hand in hand.

Chair Kang stated that the Commission was in agreement with important issues that the Commission needs to devote themselves to and where they can make a difference.

Chair Kang clarified that the Executive Committee will discuss meeting redesign, committee structure and how the Commission should move forward and will make recommendations to the Commission cooperatively as a whole for discussion and approval. Commissioner Seipel was glad to hear that. Chair Kang also confirmed that the timeline for this is tentative.

IV. PRESENTATIONS

7. Office of Child Protection - Judge Michael Nash. (16-0215)

Judge Michael Nash, Executive Director of the Office of Child Protection, provided an overview of the newly established Office of Child Protection (OCP). Judge Nash reported that the OCP currently does not have dedicated work space, he is located in Room 383 and three additional staff are located throughout the Hall of Administration. Staff consists of Carrie Miller who is serving as Assistant Director, Stefanie Gluckman is responsible for managing the Education Coordinating Council and Karen Herberts serves as Project Manager. OCP is in the process of hiring staff to serve the Philanthropy Center; one of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection (BDCCP) recommendations was to have an office within OCP that will serve as a liaison with the philanthropy community.

Pursuant to a Board Motion, Kush Cooper, a consultant, was brought onboard to work on the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) issues and will be working with multiple county departments to understand their policies, procedures, trainings, and practices with respect to LGBTQ issues. The disproportionality significantly impacts OCP's LGBTQ kids and it is important to focus on them. As OCP creates and implements its strategic plan, Ms. Cooper will help in viewing it through the LGBTQ lens.

Judge Nash identified four tasks that the OCP will perform:

- 1. Advise the Board and take directions from the Board on issues related to child protection and report to the Board on actions taken or intended by OCP;**
- 2. Work collaboratively with county agencies and other entities to identify issues impacting job protection and safety of Los Angeles County and develop a response on improvement on how the system can serve children and families;**

3. **Work with relevant entities to implement recommendations from BRCCP; and**
4. **Work on other issues impacting child protection raised by the Board and other issues with the Board's approval.**

OCP Strategic Plan:

- **OCP was established in February 2015 under the directions of Fesia Davenport, Interim Director of OCP, and Judge Nash. OCP have been diligently working on its strategic plan. OCP currently have a draft plan that encompasses elements of Ms. Davenport's draft version and staff's draft version of the Strategic Plan, both based on works that have been done. The draft Strategic Plan is in the process of being shared with the Board. Judge Nash has already met with two Supervisors and their deputies. Once input from the Board and agencies heads are received, Judge Nash will share it with others and the Commission for further input. A finalized version of the Strategic Plan is hoped to be completed in a couple of months. This will be the road map for OCP;**
- **The Strategic Plan is broken into focus areas: Safety, Permanency, Child Well-Being, Cross-Cutting Strategy and Prevention plan highlighted. Judge Nash hopes to come up with a plan on how OCP want to approach prevention in Los Angeles County. For instance, making sure there is an array of services available within the communities designed to prevent people from coming into contact with the child welfare and child protection system and to ensure that those services are made available for those that do come into contact with the system, to prevent further penetration into the system of those families.**

BRCCP recommended that public health nurses are paired up with social workers on investigations in child abuse or neglect. There is a pilot project underway that OCP will be reporting on in a few months. Public health nurses need to be looked at globally on how they are used in the County and how they can most effectively be used with respect to children that OCP is working with in the system.

Legislative AB319- authorizes the use of public health nurses to help monitor psychotropic medication. A couple of counties are utilizing public health nurses for that process. Psychotropic medication needs to be look at how it's used in the County. OCP began to focused on psychotropic medications last year and working on adding how they will work with this issue to the plan.

Due to the good work of Carrie Miller and the County Counsel, county agencies agreed to share information in ways that has never been done before and hoping to develop a technology that will aid in the sharing of information in the agreement that was crafted. OCP will continue to pursue.

The BRCCP executive summary report was referenced. The BRCCP was created in response to another tragic death of a child that has been touched by one or more child protection network. The BRCCP report envisioned an office of child protection with broad and significant power. OCP was created by the Board as a facilitator to what needs to be done under the authority of the Board.

Essence of OCP:

- **Focus on working with all key players to develop a structure that will reduce the risk of negative impact on a child touched by one more entities in Los Angeles County.**
 - o **Look at how risk is assessed in the County and look at the different plays involved in this process; look at DCFS and other agencies such as Law Enforcement, the Education System, Probation Department (PD), Department of Public and Social Services and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) on their part of the process and how it's being managed; how the agencies are communicating and coordinating with each other on their part of the process.**
 - o **Once the structure is in place, the hopefully OCP can have a system that will reduce the risk of what happened that lead to BRCCP and beyond.**

OCP will have a strong role in implementation:

- **OCP will look at what kind of training and cross-training is necessary and what kind of resource is needed to do the work. OCP will need to set up some kind of process to monitor how all this is working and if it's working in a way OPC has intended for it to work and how OPC is going to evaluate whether or not it had the impact that they want.**

- o The BRCCP report stated that the State of Emergency exists in the County and the need to be concerned with the safety of children. It also stated that many key entities in the system work in silos. By bringing everyone together to work on this issue, it will protect the children and lay a foundation for everything that OCP wants to do;
- o In previous experience as a presiding judge in the Juvenile Court, Judge Nash was focused on enhancing communication, cooperation, coordination among the entities that effect children and families that the Court works with. In his first year, he had invited the directors of DCFS, DMH and the Chief of PD to a meeting. All agreed on meeting together and on developing and implementing a protocol on how to deal with cross-cover kids of the County, which was implemented in October 1997. The protocol continues today and shows that entities can work together and trust each other. During his remaining time at the Court, everything the Court did was a result of collaboration between the Court and everyone they were involved with. Judge Nash hopes that the essence of OCP will have the same impact.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Judge Nash conveyed that the Child Protection system does not work without the involvement of the Court and vice versa. Although the Court is its own governing entity, it is a major piece of the Child Protection system in the County. Judge Nash has already set up regular communication with the Court and the Court is mentioned throughout OCP's Strategic Plan. In regards to changes that involve finances, OCP would ideally connect with relevant agencies to look at the issue and look at how it can be resolved. If funding is a barrier, then OCP will look at those that are funders and hope that they will help support OCP's plans.

In response to questions posed by the Commission regarding how the County can do oversight on the Welcome Center to ensure children are taken care of, Judge Nash referenced the system at MacLaren Children's Center, a former county-run shelter. When a child entered the center, the Court was immediately notified. Following the notification, the Court would set a "15 day review" where DCFS was required to report back to the court on how the child is doing and what efforts were made to place the child. Judge Nash stated that there needs to be the same process in place for children, whether new or existing in the system, going through the Welcome Center, a 72-hour placement facility, or a 30-day shelter. The role of the Court is to oversee the function of the system and agencies to see if it's serving children and families the way it was intended to.

Judge Nash added that the court has to assert its oversight authority. By doing so, it will ensure that children stay at places only as long as they need to be and it will keep the pressure on agencies to remove children from there as quickly as possible and into the best situation possible. Also, if reports are provided to the Court, there will be a real data base to see exactly what is happening and speed up the process. Judge Nash drafted a process for the Court to consider and will share what he sent with the Commission. Judge Nash urged the Commission to contact the Court to implement the process and get involved.

Judge Nash also reported the following:

- **Family Finding/ Relative Care:**
 - o About 52 percent foster children are with relatives, this percentage has not changed dramatically over the years;
 - o Spoke with Marc Cherna, Director of Health and Human Services in Allegheny County of Pennsylvania. 70 percent of their foster children are with relatives;
 - o We must have a philosophical and practical commitment to working with families and placing children with their own families;
 - o All front-end workers need training in using family find technology and utilize their resources;
 - o DCFS should be using family finding for every case;
 - o Ensure that the agencies that are certifying foster parents are fully staffed so that they can evaluate as many relatives as possible in a timely manner.

In response questions posed by the Commission, Diana Iglesias, DCFS, stated that they have dedicated P3 workers for redeployment of resources. DCFS presented a Board Letter regarding relative support service contracts and relative home assessment contracts which would address issues by having outside agencies come in and help DCFS support the families. Judge Nash added that family finding started in Los Angeles through a cold case program known as “P3”. It was designed to look at kids aging out of the system. The technology allowed the department to see if there were relatives that they have overlooked that can care for the child while they are still in the system or aging out the system. In regards to the shortage of general placement and silos needing to come together, Judge Nash conveyed that if there is a philosophical and practical commitment to locating, identifying, and supporting families, it can be done.

The Commission can support OCP by providing help. OCP needs input and welcomes questions and suggestions. Additionally, OCP will keep the Commission informed. The Commission expressed its interest in seeing BRCCP's recommendations implemented and stated that there are potentially 15 Commissioners that can provide help. OCP and the Commission can collaborate to figure out how the Commission can be an added value. OCP agreed to attend the Commission meeting quarterly to provide updates.

In response questions posed by the Commission, Judge Nash confirmed that the Court is there to provide independent judgement and make decisions on relevant issues. The system was designed for checks and balances to any extent that DCFS or other parties disagree with the decisions made by the Court.

Commissioner Kim requested DCFS report at the next meeting on the utility of the family finding technology; to what extent it is being used.

Member of the public, Sue Abrams of the Children's Law Center of Los Angeles (CLC), stated that they support the idea of the Court having oversight in placing children. CLC is co-sponsoring several bills this year with Alliance for Children's Rights to support relative placement and family finding at the beginning of the case.

The Commission thanked Judge Nash for his time.

V. MISCELLANEOUS

8. Matters not posted on the agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (16-0218)

There were no matters presented.

9. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on item(s) of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (16-0219)

No members of the public addressed the Commission on this item.

10. Adjournment. (16-0220)

The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.